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Environmental knowledge and attitudes of teachers and students in Lamu, Kenya: Implications for climate change adaptation interventions

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Abstract

The sought to investigate teacher-student environmental attitudes in Lamu County, Kenya. Data were collected using closed ended questions from a sample of 157 teachers and high school students from Lamu County. Environmental attitudes were measured using the revised New Environmental Paradigms (NEP) scales. We measured how participants viewed seriousness of environmental problems, how participants viewed government efforts to conserve environment, participants' self-reported pro-environmental behaviour, i.e., support government conservation policy, and self-reported pro-environmental behaviour in terms of volunteerism towards local community conservation efforts. Environmental attitudes scores correlated significantly (r = 0.17) with scores on how participants viewed seriousness of national environmental problems, (the higher the NEP score, the more likely the problems are seen as serious); Environmental attitudes scores correlated significantly (.24) with scores on how participants' perceived government's efforts to address environmental problems. Environmental attitudes scores correlated significantly (r=.36) with a 5-item measure of support for pro-environment policies (the higher the NEP score, the more support for the policies); Environmental attitudes scores correlated significantly (.27) with an 8-item measure of self-reported pro-environmental behaviors (more behaviors are reported by those with high NEP scores). Finally, results of two-factor multivariate analysis of variance between-subjects design with gender and participant's status (teacher versus student) as the independent variables, showed that the main effect for gender on environmental attitudes were statistically significant, F (1,13) = 5.16, $p < 0.05$. Also, the main effect for participant status on the combined dependent variables were statistically significant for perceived government efforts in addressing environmental problems and self-reported willingness to support government conservation policy, F (1, 153) = 17.74, $p < 0.05$, F (1, 153) = 12.80, $p < 0.05$, respectively. Also, the interaction effects on the combined dependent variables were statistically significant for self-reported willingness to volunteer and participate in community activities, F (1, 153) = 8.66, $p < 0.05$. Deconstruction of interaction effects and follow-up post-hoc tests revealed the statistically signigicant differences in volunteering lie between female and male teachers, and female teachers and female students. Differences between female teachers and male students were not statistically significant. Female teachers were least willing to volunteer and participate in community conservation activities. These is possibly due to conflict in schedule particualy given the pressure to cope with school-work and household chores. These findings are have implication on grassroot climate change adaptation activities that emphasize involvement of women.

Key words: Environmental attitudes, pro-environmental behavior, revised new environmental paradigm scales, high school teachers, Lamu, Kenya